

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7-12, 15, 18-20, 23, and 26-30 are now pending in the application. Claims 4-6 and 25 have previously been cancelled. Claims 13, 14, 16, 17, 21, 22, and 24 have previously been withdrawn from consideration. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 7-12, 15, 18-20, and 26-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Pataille* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,520,507) in view of *Park* (U.S. Pat. No. 7,022,769). Claim 23 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Pataille* in view of *Park*, and further in view of *Johnston* (U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2002/0158421). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Both rejections rely on the ‘769 Patent, which is prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). (The publication and issue dates of the ‘769 Patent are after the filing date of the present application.) Without otherwise admitting the substantive relevance of either the ‘769 Patent or the other patents cited by the Examiner, Applicants enclose herewith a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 and associated evidence under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131, to advance prosecution. The Declaration establishes that the present invention was conceived and reduced to practice in this country prior to July 15, 2003, which is the filing date of *Park*. Therefore, *Park* does not constitute prior art to the presently pending claims 1-3, 7-12, 15, 18-20, 23, and 26-30. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, which are all based on the *Park* reference, are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 17 August 2006

By: 

David L. Suter, Reg. No. 30,692

Harness, Dickey & Pierce, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

Correspondence Address:
Freudenberg-NOK General Partnership
CUSTOMER NO. 29293
Legal Department
47690 East Anchor Court
Plymouth, MI 48170-2455
Direct Line: (734) 354-5445
Facsimile: (734) 451-1445

DLS/sem